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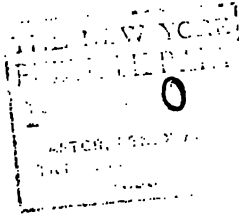
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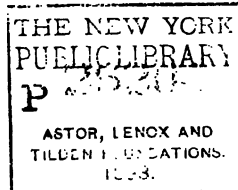
The Story of Bryan's Station

Rank.





MEMORIAL ENCLOSING THE FAMOUS SPRING AT BRYAN'S STATION



THE STORY OF BRYAN'S STATION

AS TOLD IN THE

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT BRYAN'S STATION,
FAYETTE COUNTY, KENTUCKY,
AUGUST 18TH. 1896

BY

Compliments
GEORGE W. RANCK

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE
MEMORIAL TO THE

WOMEN OF BRYAN'S STATION

ERECTED BY THE LEXINGTON CHAPTER
OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE AMER-
ICAN REVOLUTION, AUG. 18, 1896

WITH HISTORICAL NOTES BY THE WRITER

Author of "O'Hara and His Elegies," "History of Lexington
Kentucky," "Girty, the White Indian," "The
Traveling Church," Etc., Etc.

Corrected and Approved Edition.

LEXINGTON, KY
TRANSYLVANIA PRINTING CO
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ADDRESS

Madam Regent and Ladies of the Lexington Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Ladies and Gentlemen: I have been honored by the Lexington Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution with the commission to write for this notable occasion. * The Story of Bryan's Station. The ladies gave me no easy task, for while much of the material that has come down to us on this subject is good, all of it is fragmentary, some of it is confused and inaccurate, and not a little is mere repetition embellished by an exuberant fancy. It is for these reasons partly that Bryan's Station has not taken the place it deserves in general American history, a place from which, let us hope, it will no longer be missing after the events of this auspicious day.

*As the date of the anniversary of the event commemorated—August 16—fell this year (1896) on Sunday, the dedicatory exercises at Bryan's Station were, for convenience, held on Tuesday, August 18, 1896.

I have tried in this address to remove these blemishes and to overcome these disadvantages. To do this I have gone back to original sources of information entirely—to eye-witnesses of the events and actors in the scenes of Bryan's Station, and to authorities who actually lived when the pioneers lived, who knew them personally and received their facts directly from them

If this address, therefore, has any merit it is mainly due to the use of contemporary evidence which furnishes the strongest material from which history can be written; to the fact that the writer has conscientiously endeavored to make it accurate, impartial and reliable, and because it is the first attempt that has ever been made to give to our literature a full, complete and consecutive

STORY OF BRYAN'S STATION.

An eloquent and perpetual reminder of the coming of the pioneers to the Blue Grass Region of Kentucky is an English name.

In 1773, when the McAfees penetrated for the first time to these luxuriant depths, an elk was killed that so surpassed all others

they had seen that his grandly branching antlers were set up as a trophy on the bank of a new found stream, and from that day to this the once unheard of water has been known by the beautiful name of "Elkhorn."*

The earliest known explorers identified with the north fork of this romantic stream, and with the ground now known as "Bryan's Station," came here in 1774 and 1775, and included John Floyd, James Douglas and Hancock Taylor, three deputy surveyors of Fincastle county Va., of which Kentucky was then a part; William Bryan, a hunter from that section of North Carolina now known as Rowan county, and John Ellis, a Virginia veteran of the French and Indian wars.† The land they sought was all that even the land-craving heart of the Anglo Saxon could desire, and claims were located, surveys made and temporary improvements were started. But the day of possession was not yet. The explorers were suddenly forced to abandon their camp, which remained abandoned for

*McAfee's Pioneer Sketches.

†Henderson's Journal; see also Fayette records. Denham vs. Johnson, in which William Bryan proves settlement of John Ellis on North Elkhorn.

years, for war had broken out between the outraged Ohio Indians and the colony of Virginia, and it had barely ended when the great struggle for American independence commenced. The experiences of the adventurous spirits we have named strikingly illustrate the perils of the Kentucky wilderness at this time. They all endured almost incredible privations and sufferings, all of them were wounded by the Indians and three out of the five met death at their hands. *

In 1779 that remarkable and mischievous land law of Virginia was enacted which turned such a tide of immigration into Kentucky, and permanent settlements were made for the first time within the present limits of Fayette county. One of these was Bryan's Station. It was founded by four Bryan†

*Taylor was killed in Madison county in 1774, Bryan in Fayette in 1780, and Floyd in Jefferson in 1788. Douglas died in Bourbon in 1798 and Ellis in Fayette in 1797. Floyd secured an immense amount of Kentucky land, and Fayette county records credit Ellis with the enormous number of 98,000 acres, variously located. Ellis and Floyd both served in the Continental army after the visit to the North Elkhorn region detailed above.

†We give the name as it was used by most of the members of the family in Kentucky at that time, though it was then known as "Bryant" also. The certificates issued by the Land Commissioners at the session of their court held at the station in December, 1779, and January, 1780, called the family "Bryan" and the locality "Bryant's Station." (See Bryan and Owe's vs. Wallace, Fayette records.) And this precedent was followed by the Court

brothers from North Carolina—William, Morgan, James and Joseph, of whom the above mentioned William was the leading spirit, and with them was William Grant, who, like the leader, had married a sister of Daniel Boone. All five were elderly but stalwart woodsmen, and as each was blessed with a great family of children, in accordance with a striking feature of the day, and as the children themselves were nearly all grown, they felt prepared for straggling Indians at least, as with dogs and flint-lock rifles, pack horses and cows they set out from the valley of the Yadkin. At the Cumberland river they were joined by two land hunters they accidentally met there, Cave Johnson and William Tomlinson, from Virginia, who for their better protection, made the journey with the party and helped to build the station when the trip ended.* They all came by way of Boonesborough, where

of Appeals. (See same case.) In the official reports of the battle of the Blue Licks, August, 1782, Boone gives the station name without the "t," while Caldwell (British) and Levi Todd both use that letter. John Filson, 1784, prints it one way on his map and the other way in his book, and so on from the settlement of the station down to the present time both forms of the name have been used in court records and by historians and the public.

*Autobiography of Cave Johnson. He and Tomlinson went back to Virginia in a few weeks, but both returned.

they stopped to replenish their supply of corn, and from that fort, after a laborious march, they came to the North Elkhorn creek, where they made a final halt at a spot about five miles northeast of the little stockaded settlement of Lexington. Here in the very heart of the neutral ground of the Northern and Southern Indians, in the center of their choicest game park where all might hunt, but where no tribe might remain, and in that section of it which Bancroft describes as "the matchless valley of the Elkhorn," was Bryan's Station planned. How little did these rich acres cost in gold—how much did they cost in suffering and in blood. The new station was quickly built. It was a rude and solitary habitation, but as strong as it was rude. It consisted at first of twelve or fourteen cabins of logs with the bark on, with roofs of roughest clapboards and provided with chimneys of sticks and clay, but unlighted by one pane of glass, and all arranged as a hollow square by the aid of great pickets made of the trunks of trees split in two and planted firmly in the ground. And the whole, green as the forest from which it

had been hewed, was fashioned by the ax and put together by wooden pegs and pins without the help of a nail or a hinge of iron. The station was more noticeable at this time for its situation than for its size. It stood on an elevated point* that had been cleared of trees big enough to screen an enemy and which tapered steeply down to the southern bank of the heavily wooded creek. At the foot of the hill which hid it from the station, and facing the creek, was a spring of almost ice-cold water that issued from a ledge of rocks that long jutted from the hillside, but which was covered then by wild vegetation and thick primeval mosses, and the clear little stream that came from it uniting with another like it flowed unseen into the creek through a thicket of waving cane. This spring which had much to do with determining the location of the fort† was destined through the heroism of Kentucky women to become the most famous fountain of the western

*Marshall's History of Kentucky. John Bradford's Notes on the Early Settlement of Kentucky

†A spring was such a necessity of early pioneer life that it nearly always determined the location of a settlement. It was a spring that caused the erection of the cabins at Harrodsburg, Booneborough, Georgetown, Lexington and a multitude of other forts and stations in Kentucky.

wilderness. A foot path zigzagging through the freshly made stumps of trees and past some saplings of dogwood and pawpaw, led down from the station to this spring, while a much broader track sloped from the main gate on the southeastern side of the stockade to a road a little distance away, and nearly fronting the fort, that was a priceless boon to the pioneers. It seemed an ancient product of human skill, but was, in fact, a "trace," hard and firm, made by the buffaloes alone which had thundered over it for a thousand years in their journeys to the Salt Licks. Near by was a clearing planted in corn, but all else but the hill itself—the forests, the canebrakes, the wilderness stream, the wild rye, the peavine and the white clover—was unchanged by the hand of man. The settlers were very busy, for they had to depend upon themselves alone for the commonest comforts and necessities of life. Pots and skillets and a few ordinary implements they did possess, but nearly everything else they had to make, from slab tables to buffalo tallow dips, from hand mills to deerskin moccasins. And hunting seemed never to stop,

for the settlers lived on wild game, and times were bad indeed at Bryan's Station when the ranger came back without his usual load.

Thanks to the blow inflicted by the genius of Clarke in his Vincennes campaign, the Indians halted for a little season in their work of murder, and game could be had without the constant risk of life and more immigrants found their way to the Blue Grass Region in the fall of 1779. Some of them settled at Bryan's, greatly to the delight of its lonely little band, and among them was Stephen Frank, Nicholas Tomlinson, Thomas Bell, David Jones, James Hogan, Huttery Lee and Daniel Wilcoxen. Others under the leadership of Col. John Grant, of North Carolina, and Capt. William Ellis, of Virginia, went five miles further toward the spot where Paris now stands and established Grant's Station.*

*Col. Grant, who was a Revolutionary soldier, was one of the most active of the pioneers. He and Capt. Ellis seem to have first met in the Continental army, to which they both returned when their settlement was broken up by Byrd in 1780. They both came back to Kentucky and settled permanently, Ellis in the winter of 1781 and Grant in the spring of 1782 (not in 1784 as Collins has it). Col. Grant died at his home on the Licking where he had erected salt works years before. There were five of the Grants, including William at Bryan's, and all came from the Shallow Ford of the Yadkin, and all were conspicuous as frontiersmen. Israel was with Boone in his pursuit of the Indians

As the new settlers were mostly kinsmen or friends of those at Bryan's, and as neighbors were not overly plentiful, a trace was quickly cut and cleared between the two forts, and it, like the buffalo trace to Lexington, now gave signs of human travel

Bryan's Station was unusually animated in December, 1779, and January, 1780, in spite of the bitterly cold weather, as the Commissioners appointed by Virginia to settle land claims held their court within its snow covered walls and the pioneers gathered in to get the certificates that meant so much to them, for these documents secured to each holder 400 acres of land actually settled, and a pre-emption right to purchase at the State price a thousand acres or less adjoining his settlement, provided the settlement had been made before January 1, 1773; on unappropriated land, to which no other had a legal right Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton, Robert Patterson, the Todds, Ellis, McConnells and many others of the early pioneers of

who killed Edward Boone, brother of Daniel, in October, 1781. Samuel Grant was killed by the Indians near the Ohio in 1791. William was wounded in the tragic hunt on the Elkhorn. Squire was State Senator from Boone county in 1801.

Fayette county visited Bryan's Station at this time. It was while this court was in session that the Bryans, who had rested secure in the belief that they were the owners of the station land by right of settlement, met the first of a series of discouragements that caused them to abandon the place. Their settlement was found to be within the limits of a survey made in July, 1774, for William Preston, then surveyor of Fincastle county, Virginia, who had already traded it off to Joseph Rogers, also a resident of Virginia.*

This misfortune, a long spell of terribly severe weather and other adverse circumstances made the winter a gloomy one at Bryan's. As the season advanced, the little store of corn was exhausted, owing to the presence of new-comers, who increased the consumption of it and had arrived too late to plant for themselves. So there was no bread, and even meat was scarce, for the larger game went further away as settlers increased.

*Deposition of Joseph Rogers in 1791, Fayette county records. The patent says: "Granted to Joseph Rogers and John Seabury;" Bledsoe vs. Tandy. Preston was never in Kentucky. He died in 1783 in what is now Montgomery county, Virginia.

The spring of 1780 came, and with it came the Indians, as they always did at that season of the year. All the traces were infested with them, and several hunters had already been killed, when the salt gave out both at Lexington and at Bryan's, and as salt was indispensable, a party of men made up from both places started for Bullitt's Lick, near Salt river to get some. But they had hardly passed the little cluster of stockaded cabins called Leestown and reached the bank of the Kentucky river, when they were suddenly attacked by Indians who killed Stephen Frank and wounded Nicholas Tomlinson, William Bryan and several others of the party, who, however, quickly recovered, but the expedition had to be abandoned. Frankfort, subsequently settled near the site of this occurrence, is said to have taken its name from the unfortunate hunter killed that day. More Indians than ever now beset the traces and the fort, and neither the pioneers nor their stock could go beyond the clearing without danger; meat grew scarcer still, and hunting parties, to avoid the savages, had to slip out of the station before

daybreak. make a wide circuit and return at night. When a man went out at this time he was never certain that he would ever get back.

About the 20th of May this year—1780*—meat was so badly needed that twelve mounted men rode from the station in quest of game to some woods near where Georgetown now stands. There they divided, with the understanding that one party under William Bryan and another under James Hogan should range down the Elkhorn—each party taking a side—and meet at night at the mouth of Cane Run. Soon after they parted Hogan and his men were pursued by Indians, and abandoning a led horse, brought along to carry game, they distanced the savages and galloped back to the station. Early the next morning, Hogan, with reinforcements, went to the relief of Bryan's party, which had camped at the place agreed upon, but they arrived too late to prevent disaster. The Indians had used the captured pack-horse, which was provided with a bell, to

*Several writers, including Collins, have incorrectly given the year as 1781.

lead the other party into an ambushade, and had defeated the hunters, mortally wounding William Bryan and severely wounding William Grant, when Hogan's band rode up and finally routed the savages in turn. In this last fight one of the Indians was killed and scalped and three of the white men were wounded. One of the wounded was David Jones, after whom "David's Fork," a tributary of the Elkhorn was named.* He was shot through the middle of the chest, but survived. The suffering hunters supported in their saddles were brought to the station, where protracted anxiety gave way to successive feelings of joy, sympathy and fear as the faint and bleeding little party filed slowly through the gate. William Bryan, who had been mangled by three bullets, was carried to his cabin, in a dying condition, and before the dawn of another morning the unfortunate woodsman expired. And then in the midst of sorrow and great depression, while four wounded men required attention, and with every male mourner carrying a rifle, occurred

*The stream was first known as "David Jones' Fork," and afterward familiarly shortened to "Davy's Fork," but for nearly a century has held to the more dignified appellation of "David's Fork." See depositions, Fayette county records.

the first funeral at Bryan's Station. No church bell tolled as the little train went carefully over the rocks and logs where the buffalo trace crossed the creek, and there was no music but the rippling of the forest stream when the settlers halted in the woods on the other side opposite the station. A good man made a simple prayer, and William Bryan was laid to rest under the spreading branches of an oak which stood at his head, with his initials deeply cut into the bark.

The Bryans had talked of leaving the station as soon as they found that they were not the owners of the land, and now after the death of their leader they were more inclined to abandon it than ever. One more event settled the matter, for they barely escaped destruction. On the 22d of June, Col. Byrd, of the British army, at the head of one of the largest and most formidable bodies of Indians and Canadians that had ever invaded Kentucky, captured Ruddle's Station in the present Harrison county, and immediately took Martin's also, which was only a few

miles from Bryan's* Consternation reigned in all the log forts, for the invaders had brought to Kentucky for the first time the one thing the pioneers dreaded—artillery. Grant's Station was instantly evacuated, much to the disgust of scouting Indians, who managed, however, to kill some of the rapidly retreating garrison, and then pushed on to Bryan's, where they seized many horses, ruined much of the growing corn and were confidently expecting the arrival of the army, when Col. Byrd, either through fear of the sudden falling of the waters of the Licking, from disgust at the utter disregard of his authority by his wild allies, or from horror at their atrocities, hastily retreated, and the station that seemed doomed to immediate destruction was saved as by a miracle.

The Bryans and others from the same State were now utterly discouraged and determined to return to North Carolina. But it was no easy matter to get away, with land selling for a song, and everything else enormously high, and with women, children, household goods

*Ruddle's fort was about a mile and a quarter above the site now known as Lair's station, while Martin's was still closer to Bryan's, as it was on Stoner Creek in Bourbon county. It was about five miles from Ruddle's.

and provisions to move, after the Indians had stolen nearly all the horses. In July corn was selling at a hundred and twenty dollars per bushel in continental currency, and one man was known to have given as much as nine hundred acres of pre-emption land for a horse. All the wounded hunters in the station had time to get well before the arrangements for the trip were completed, but the emigrants were ready at last, and early one morning at the close of the month of August, 1780, the pack-horses were loaded, farewells were said to the few who remained, the conch shell was blown, the train moved off on the old buffalo trace, and the Bryans and their party abandoned the station forever.* They had been there but little more than a year, but troubles and privations had made the time seem infinitely longer. Some years after this, when the war was over, and

*Morgan Bryan, one of the four brothers, in a deposit on before James Trotter, taken March 10, 1795, refers to the movements of the Bryans and others in May, 1780, and says: "All of whom and myself removed from the Kentucky country in the August following, and one of us returned, as far as I know before the year 1784." Daniel Bryan and George Bryan depose that they left in 1780, but state that they returned at a later date than 1784, while Samuel Bryan simply deposes that he remained at the station until the summer of 1780. See Fayette records, Bryan and Owens vs. Wallace; Bledsoe vs. Tandy, and other suits.

pioneers could live outside of the prison-like forts, members of this family and party came back to other lands they had taken up in Fayette county, but to Bryan's Station they returned no more.

So at the beginning of the autumn of 1780 only a few of the cabins at Bryan's Station were occupied, and the place seemed about to be entirely deserted when its prospects brightened. Clarke's expedition against the Piqua Indians, immediately after Byrd's invasion, restored confidence; immigrants began again to pour into the country and a number of them from Virginia settled at Bryan's, making the station stronger than ever. Among them were John Ellis, one of the original explorers, with his family and negroes; three Craig brothers, Elijah, John and Jeremiah; Joseph Stucker and relatives, and John Martin, John Suggett and several Hendersons and Mitchells. Later in the fall came Mr. Williams, of North Carolina, with his young son Ellison, and about the same time arrived Robert Johnson* brother

*Autobiography of Cave Johnson. Both of the Johnson brothers had to go to Virginia in the spring of 1782 and did not return until the fall of that year.

of Cave Johnson, from Beargrass, near the present Louisville, with his family, including his infant son, Richard M , born at that place and afterward distinguished as a soldier and Vice-President. The new-comers added more cabins to the station, increased its comforts and conveniences, and what was of vital importance, increased its strength, for now since the fall of Martin's and Ruddell's it was the most exposed of all the stations north of the Kentucky river. Lexington was superior, but it was mainly because her founders had the forethought to include a splendid spring within her walls, an advantage, strange to say, that none of the other stations enjoyed.

When the winter came on the Indians left the settlers to fight the snow and ice and starvation, but they were back again as soon as the spring of 1781 brought pleasant weather. Before the dogwood bloomed they had crept up to the station and killed a man who was on the lookout, while Daniel Wilcoxon ploughed the corn, and it was only by a lucky accident that Wilcoxon escaped with his life. June opened with another tragedy,

for Huttery Lee was killed while trying to give his horse grass outside of the walls so incessantly watched by the skulking foe. His horse was shot and he himself was scalped, dying while yet a youth. Both of these victims of the Indians were buried by the side of William Bryan in the rude station graveyard across the creek. But the settlement survived in spite of everything, and the hearts of the inmates were strengthened when the news was brought in December that a whole congregation of Virginians had arrived at Gilbert's Creek,* and that a number of old friends and neighbors who formed part of it would settle near them in the coming spring. Not only were more strong arms needed but all hungered and thirsted for news from their far-distant old home, for letters were few and hard to get and not a single newspaper was published in the entire Kentucky wilderness. The winter was monotonous, but the spring of 1782 was marked by an early omen of a tragic year, for the station was shocked on the 23d of March by the news of Estill's defeat, brought

*Near Lancaster, Ky. See "Traveling Church," published 1891.

by two survivors of the fatal engagement. One was William Irvine, helpless from three gun shot wounds, and the other was Joseph Proctor, who had rescued him after the most desperate and gallant exertions. In April, about two weeks after this incident, the expected Virginia families arrived from Gilbert's Creek, re-enforcing Bryan's and other Blue Grass forts to some extent, but mainly uniting to settle on David's Fork.* None, however, were distant from Bryan's, where their leader, Capt. William Ellis, and some of his riflemen were destined soon to gather.

Bryan's Station was at its best in the summer of 1782. It then included about forty cabins with clapboard roofs, all of which sloped inwardly, and like all the larger pioneer forts in Kentucky, was a parallelogram in shape, with a block house at each angle, and every space not occupied by the back or outside wall of a cabin was filled in with pointed log pickets twelve feet high. Commencing a little distance from the north-

*Now known as the Chilesburg neighborhood. History of Fayette County, Kentucky, page 232.

eastern brow of the hill overlooking the creek, it ran back two hundred yards in length by fifty yards in width, and was provided with two big gates that swung on enormous wooden hinges—one of the gates being on the southeastern side nearest the buffalo trace, which long afterward developed into the Bryan Station turnpike.* On the outside and close to the palisades were several cabins, in one of which lived James Morgan, his wife and one infant child, and there were other structures that sheltered tanning vats, rude contrivances for making rope and other absolutely necessary articles. The live stock had increased, more land had been cleared and fenced, a vegetable garden was flourishing and a hundred acres of full grown corn extended along one side of the buffalo trace past the fort and down to the forest covered bank of the creek. Trees still thickly lined the other side of the trace, making it now a narrow lane. There was a heavy growth of hemp west and north of the present old brick residence which stands on

*It remained a "dirt road" until 1859, when the five miles from the city limits of Lexington were macadamized.

the ground, then clear of everything but stumps and tall weeds ; wild rye and a thicket of lofty cane, in which a man on horseback could hide, covered the marshy bottom between the hillside and the creek in the neighborhood of the spring, so that the station though it stood in the midst of cleared and elevated land, was rimmed around at no great distance by luxuriant vegetation.

Such was Bryan's Station before the sun set on the 15th of August, 1782, but there was excitement in the little garrison of forty-four riflemen, and among the women and children, by the time bear grease lamps and buffalo tallow dips were lighted, for a messenger had galloped up with the news that Capt. John Holder, with men from his own station, from McGee's and Strode's had been defeated at the Upper Blue Licks by a band of Indians he had been pursuing, who had committed depredations and captured children at Hoy's Station in the present Madison county. The word was for the settlers to rendezvous at Hoy's.* Lexington had

*Hoy's Station, which had then (1782) been established about a year, was close to the site of the present Foytown, in Madison county, and as Holder's was on the Kentucky river, only two-

already been notified and was preparing to go and hunt down the savages, and now the garrison at Bryan's hurried to get ready to do the same, which was exactly what a wily foe had commissioned his advance guard to effect, with a view to the destruction of both places,* for one of the largest forces that had ever come against the settlements was even then at their very gates.

The Northwestern tribes, though often at variance with each other, never forgot that Kentucky was the common hunting ground of them all, and their inveterate hatred of the pioneer intruders upon it had been repeatedly worked by the British to their own advantage. Such was now the case. Early in August the British Commandant of the Northwest, Lieutenant-Governor Henry Hamilton, whose headquarters were at Detroit, had ordered Capt. William Caldwell to

miles from Boonesborough, the alarm soon reached him. In his pursuit he increased his party first at Mc Lee's Station, which was on Cooper's Run, in Fayette county, three miles from Boonesborough, and then at Strodes, which was two miles from the present Winchester, and then the principal settlement of what is now Clark county. "Strode's Road" is still a reminder of the old station.

*Holder was defeated on the 14th or 15th of August; and if the settlers could be drawn away to Hoyer's, Bryan's would not only be without a garrison itself but it could obtain no aid from the neighboring stations, as they too would be depleted.

collect militia and Indians and "destroy the rebel settlements south of the Ohio."* Caldwell,† who seems to have been a militia officer of foreign birth and a Tory, is not an actual renegade, gathered one company of Tory and Canadian rangers, and figured as the official and ostensible head of the movement, though its real leader was the notorious Simon Girty,‡ who had been captured by the savages when a child, and adopted by them, and had finally become an Indian in everything but complexion, and was a power both in the council house and on the warpath. A grand conference of the dusky allies of the crown, to consider the question of the invasion of Kentucky, was held at old Chillicothe, about three miles northwest of

*Haldimand MSS., Ottawa, Canada. Sir Frederick Haldimand was Governor of Canada from 1778 to 1784.

†Caldwell figured conspicuously at Sandusky in June, 1782. A prejudiced writer makes him the inactive Captain of a company of Tory militia disguised as Indians at the battle of Fallen Timber, in 1794. Shortly after this, when the British delivered up the military posts of the Northwest, he settled at Amherstburg (formerly Malden), Canada, along with Byrd, Girty and McKee.

‡See "Girty the White Indian" in *Magazine of American History* for March, 1886, which the author claims as the first attempt in more than a century to give Girty's life after a careful and unprejudiced study of the most reliable original authorities, both British and American.

[This ancient camping ground of the Shawanee and favorite rendezvous of the savage tribes when on the warpath was near the head of the Little Miami river. Traces led from it to other so-called "towns," including those of the Piqua and Pickaway Indians on the Big Miami.]

the present city of Xenia, Ohio, and the best known of the Shawanese towns or camping places in the Miami country, and here, mainly through the influence of Girty, the tribes again united to make another and a supreme effort to drive the whites from their ancient domain forever.

A force was immediately organized for this purpose, and included quotas of warriors from the Shawanese, Wyandot, Huron and five or six other tribes, in whose overshadowing numbers the handful of militia was lost, and the authority of Caldwell seems to have been even more completely ignored than was that of Byrd at Ruddle's and Martin's two years before.* In fact most of the assembled warriors had participated in that very movement, and, uncontrollable as ever, had chosen a leader of their own, and from this time until the campaign ended Girty had the whole Indian force at his back and was the real commander and master-spirit of the expedition. He was certainly recognized as such by the pioneers, who mention no

*Ruddle remonstrated with Byrd about the barbarities of the Indians. Byrd confessed himself unable to restrain them, saying they so greatly outnumbered the British that he was in their power.

other opposing leader, and the British records show that he had already played nearly as prominent a part at Ruddle's when supported by the savages, he, and not Byrd, demanded the surrender of the place.* Backed by such a force he did not need a commission from Hamilton to make him a leader.

The exact strength of the invading force will never be known. The lowest estimate on the British side† puts it at 300 men, and the highest from one of the best American sources‡ makes it considerably over 600. Boone, who was a close personal observer of this matter, and whose written statements are singularly calm and unprejudiced, says at one time that "the Indians exceeded 400," and at another time||, that "the Indians and Canadians together were about 500."§

There is every reason to believe that they

*Hamilton Papers. The British governor was not unmindful of the influence Girty exerted among the northwestern tribes. Kiernan says in Volume II. of *American Pioneer*, that Girty was armed by Hamilton with a proclamation from his own hand to guarantee pardon and protection to all who would swear allegiance to the Crown.

†Caldwell. McKee makes the number larger.

‡Bradford, who says, "There were 560 Indians and about 60 Canadians and Tories forming an army of more than 600 to fight 42 men."

||Filson.

§Marshall adopts Boone's figures as given to Filson. None of the Kentucky historians we mention had access to the British accounts we quote from.

amounted to at least 500, but no matter how estimated, by friend or foe, the force appeared overwhelming for the end in view.

Exulting in their strength, unimpeded by baggage of any kind, and equipped only for a very short campaign, during which they expected to live mainly upon the enemy, the warriors started out from the Shawanese camp, speeded down the Little Miami, swarmed across the Ohio in canoes, moved rapidly up the Licking and, on the night of August 15th, arrived at Bryan's Station and silently settled themselves about it. Not a single note of warning had been sounded. Boonesborough had been twice besieged and Martin's and Ruddell's had been destroyed; but no steps seem to have been taken to guard the settlements against surprise, and Girty and his warriors reached the heart of the Blue Grass Region unseen and unchallenged by scout, picket or sentinel, a circumstance which provoked soon after some exceedingly lively comments from George Rogers Clark†. The whole force took posi-

Caldwell, Boone, Ellison Williams, Bradford and Marshall give the 15th as date of arrival. See note on page —.
 † Virginia State Papers, Vol. III., pages 385-387.

tions either on or near the bank of the creek and as close to the fort as it could, to be effectually concealed by the tall and abundant vegetation. One detachment was posted among the trees and corn where the trace neared the creek, or about where the southern end of the bridge now is while the main body buried itself in the canebrake and full grown weeds, "so near the spring," says Marshall, "as to render it useless to the garrison." The Indian leaders were evidently in doubt as to whether the volunteers for the relief of Holder had yet left the fort, and with a view to obtain positive information some scouts were sent before daylight* to capture an early riser, or make enough excitement to cause the garrison to expose its strength. It was one of these pretended stragglers probably who fell before the rifle of James McBride, who it is claimed killed the first Indian shot at the siege,† and it was

*Bradford agrees with Caldwell about "the fire of the savages before sunrise."

†see Pioneer Biography of Joel McBride. Capt. James McBride was a resident of Lexington and one of the first lot owners. It is not explained how he happened to be at Bryan's Station at this time. He was killed in 1789 while surveying near the Licking, but though shot from his horse he killed an Indian before he was tomahawked.

at this time that James Morgan escaped from his cabin, on the outside of the fort with his baby strapped to his back, after concealing his wife under a slab of the cabin floor. The thrilling experience of Mrs. Morgan, the burning of the cabin and the strange meeting of the husband and wife after the battle of the Blue Licks, is one of the most dramatic features of the siege * The effort of the scouting party not only failed, but, as the Captain of the British Rangers admits, was badly managed, and in some unexplained way the quick-witted settlers detected at once the presence of a hidden army, the ambuscade near the spring and the meaning of the ruse to entice the men away to the relief of Holder. How they learned this, whether from the tenant of an outside cabin, who escaped into the fort, or whether they caught some swift warning from the Ruddle Station prisoners, that the Indians had forced to come along with them has never been explained.† The besiegers, unconscious that

*See full account on page 98 History of Lexington.

†Deposition of Nicholas Hart that he and others captured at Ruddle's in 1780 were forced to accompany the Indians when they marched to Bryan's Station and the Blue Licks. Some of the prisoners were released shortly after the close of the revolution,

their real strength had been discovered, and believing that such an every-day occurrence as the appearance of a few straggling Indians would excite no suspicion of a great force, waited silently and confidently for the departure of the company or some tell-tale effect of the alarm. But the relief party so fortunately warned did not march, nor did the garrison exhibit itself; but while the enemy waited, the suddenly-aroused and greatly-startled inmates set to work with might and main under the leadership of Capt. Elijah Craig* to prepare the post for an effective defense, and to beat the savage at his own game of deception. Thomas Bell and Nicholas Tomlinson immediately undertook the dangerous experiment of riding to Lexington after reinforcements, and made good their escape, owing, perhaps, to the desire of the enemy not to expose his presence

but the Ruddles remained in captivity fourteen years, or until the treaty of Greenville in 1794.

*The identity of the commander of the garrison, who was doubtless only a nominal and temporary leader, is not established on contemporary authority. A later writer, Collins, Vol. II., page 766, names an Elijah Craig in this connection. After the siege he removed to what is now Woodford county, Ky., married a Miss McAfee, then settled in Carroll county and is said to have been killed in the war of 1812. He is not to be confused with Elijah Craig, the Baptist preacher, who did not come to Kentucky till 1785, and who died in Scott county in 1808.

and for the same reason, doubtless, the live stock that congregated every night about the station was allowed to go out unattacked to its familiar range.

The gates had hardly been closed on the messengers when everybody thought of water, for the daily supply had not been brought up, and as it was mid-August all realized in a flash, not only that the fort could not be held without it, but that it must be obtained at once, and by the women or not had at all. For the men to go to the spring would be to do exactly as the savages desired and devote the garrison to destruction. If the women went in accordance with their regular early morning custom, the enemy would be confirmed in the delusion that their presence in force was undiscovered,* and would withhold their fire to insure the complete success of their plans. The suggestion was full of hope, but all the same the savages were known to be mere creatures of impulse, hard to control and regardless of sex. The

*The Indians evidently believed all this time that their presence in force was entirely unsuspected by the garrison and all the important-contemporary writers convey the impression that they so believed.

effort which promised success might end in a massacre, but the women were convinced of its vital importance and resolved to go. Never was a demand for heroic self-sacrifice more suddenly made or more simply and sublimely answered. There was no time for tears and lamentations, only time enough for the gathering of pails, piggins,* noggins and gourds, and for hasty embraces; and as the sun was rising on the memorable Friday of the 16th of August, 1782, the devoted women of Bryan's Station left its protecting walls, and with looks of pretended cheerfulness, but with wildly fluttering hearts, went down the hillside, beyond the reach of the garrison's guns, and gathered at the never-to-be-forgotten spring†, in point blank

*The piffin was a wooden bucket with one upright stave for a handle. The noggin was a wooden bucket with two upright staves for handles.

†The identity of this spring as the one so daringly visited by the women of the station at this time is clearly and completely established. It is the only spring mentioned in connection with the siege by the two historians personally familiar with the station at the time and the only one that answers to their descriptions. Marshall in his History of Kentucky says, "a very fine spring ran from the foot of the point on which the fort stood near the bank of the Elkhorn." Bradford in his "Notes" located the enemy "on the bank of the creek, convenient to the spring and out of sight of the fort," and then adds that the women got the water from the spring near the ambuscade. The spring now enclosed with a memorial wall is the only one at "the foot of the point" and "near the bank of the Elkhorn." (See a succeeding note.) The location of the spring is certain, no matter how the lines of the fort may have extended.

of female devotion than this, but so common were heroic deeds to the pioneer women of Kentucky, and so well was this one already known, that the historian only mentions it incidentally, and in the most matter-of-course way. Such was the mettle of the foremothers of Kentucky, who so grandly made possible the successful defense of Bryan's Station.

Hope, and joy and pride filled the fort as the stout-hearted women returned in safety with the water for which they had risked their lives and all that made life valuable, but the imminence of the danger allowed no time for the display of those feelings, and the heroines hurried at once to the moulding of bullets and to be ready to load the extra rifles that would be rapidly passed to them during the fight. It was shortly after the spring incident, according to both the British and the American accounts, and some time after the demonstration of the scouts, that the real

statement in a contribution to Cist's Cincinnati Miscellany, page 230, of Vol. 1. Heroic actions were so common to the pioneer women of Kentucky that but little effort was made to preserve them. Not the half of them has ever been told, and even Bradford treats this one in the most matter-of-course way.

attack upon the station commenced.* When the early morning advanced without the departure of the relief force from the station, Girty determined to wait no longer, and commenced operations with an attempt to draw the garrison away from the north-western side of the fort, so as expose it to a surprise from his main force, which was so admirably situated to quickly overwhelm it. To accomplish this, a squad from the detachment at the bridge site, posing as the only Indians present, made a demonstration on the side of the fort nearest the trace, and furthest from the side that was really threatened, Girty expecting the garrison to follow the usual course and mass itself where the firing commenced, and hoping above all things to provoke a pursuit that would leave the station utterly defenseless. But the crafty foe overacted his part. The watchful pioneers, mindful of the heavy ambuscade so close to the other side, caught at once the meaning of a ruse that betrayed itself in the boldness of so small a party and its

*Bradford says "the Indians rushed up about two hours after the first fire."

evident desire to be pursued. This desire was gratified but not in the way Girty expected, and not until the garrison had also set a trap and had arranged itself to the best advantage to meet the emergency. Then the gate overlooking the trace was opened, and thirteen of the garrison dashed out of the fort, firing as they ran, in an apparently reckless pursuit of the decoy party. But they did not go far—only far enough to draw an effectual fusillade from the Indians between the trace and the bridge site, and then running back with the greatest possible rapidity they reached the fort in the very nick of time. The impatient warriors in ambush near the spring had heard the firing, which was to them the signal of the success of their ruse, and believing that the garrison was fully engaged on the other side, they darted from their hiding places, with Girty at their head, and in a moment of time, as if by magic, an overwhelming force of savages, whooping, half naked, and hideously painted was rushing up the hillside toward the western gate. And flaring in their midst was the incendiary torch, a new and totally unexpected danger

to the settlers, and one more dreaded by them than all the rifles and tomahawks of the dusky horde, for their cabins were as dry as tinder, from the protracted summer heat. The distance to the fort was short, and the Indians were clearing it, with shouts of exultation, when, suddenly, and as unexpectedly as lightning from a clear sky, one volley of rifle shots after another crashed from the port holes of the station into the dusky mass. The Indians were dumbfounded and panic-stricken. The triumphant war whoop ended in terrific yells of pain, consternation and fear. Confusion reigned. Some wild shots were indeed directed to the fort, and a few daring warriors even reached the stockade and fired some cabins* with their torches; but all were caught in the swift stampede as the savages dashed from right to left to avoid another volley from the garrison, and before the echo of the flintlocks had died away along the Elkhorn, none but the slain could be seen upon the grassy slope.

*In his "Walketonika" letter or report of August 26, 1782, Caldwell says five cabins were burned. See Haldimand MSS. No report of the expedition from Girty seems to be extant. Savage-like, he troubled himself but little about written statements.

But there were no sounds of rejoicing as the savage disappeared, for the fired cabins were burning rapidly and fiercely, and for a few awful moments the station and its inmates seemed doomed to destruction. But deliverance came as by a miracle, for a stiff wind from the east blew the flames and sparks directly away from the station, and though the cabins were quickly reduced to ashes the fort was saved. The siege went on but the pioneers were greatly encouraged ; and not only because they had repulsed the enemy and escaped a conflagration, but because they knew now for a certainty from the long delay of the besiegers and their use of small arms alone, that they had no cannon, that Bryans was not as completely at the mercy of the savages as Martin's and Ruddle's had been, and that they could at least hope to hold out until the arrival of reinforcements. But, nevertheless, as the leaden hours dragged by, they tortured themselves, time and again with the thought that the messengers might be killed or captured after all, and help would come too late. But the brave messengers were safe. They

had galloped at the top of their speed to Lexington only to find, to their dismay, that all its available men, commanded, it is said, by Maj. Levi Todd, had been decoyed away from the real scene of action, and were pressing toward Hoy's Station, six miles northwest of the present Richmond, which it was supposed the Indians would attempt to capture now that Holder was defeated. The couriers flew after the hurrying volunteers as fast as their heated horses could go, caught up with them at Boone's Station,* which stood near the site of Athens, where some settlers on horseback had already assembled, and shouted out their thrilling news. As Boone happened to be absent at Boonesborough,† which was only about five miles away, Capt. William Ellis was called to the command of the Boone's Station force, and in a few moments both parties, consisting of sixteen mounted men and thirty footmen, were anxiously and excitedly marching for Bryan's Station.

*Collins' date of the settlement of Boone's Station (1788) is incorrect. The station was in existence at least a year before that time. It was there on the 30th of August, 1782, that Boone wrote his official account of the Battle of the Blue Licks.

†Boone was the leader of the party that went from Boonesborough to the aid of Bryan's Station.

In the meanwhile the Indians, so badly beaten in an open assault, returned at once to their usual tactics of doing all the damage possible with the least personal exposure, and labored with persistent energy to pick off the garrison in detail. Rifle balls were poured into the fort from the corn, the hemp and the cane, from every stump and tree and clump of weeds that could hide an Indian marksman, and the fusillade resulted before the close of the day in the killing of two of the garrison, Atkinson and Mitchell, and in the wounding of the gallant Nicholas Tomlinson, who afterwards met with such a tragic fate in Hardin's expedition.* But the sharpshooting was not all one way. Jacob Stucker, who was with Boone in 1780, when the famous woodsman pursued the savages who had killed his brother Edward, seems to have had a hand in the fray; for the tale is told that at this stage of the siege, little Betsy Johnson ran to her mother with

*This brave messenger, who was wounded twice in the service of the station, was killed in the fall of 1790 while employed in this expedition as a spy. At the defeat of a detachment of the army under Col. John Hardin on the Oglaze, the daring Tomlinson, who was in advance, was literally shot to pieces by an ambuscade of more than a thousand Indians. Bradford.

the news that "Jake Stucker has just killed an Indian!" "Pshaw," replied the stout-hearted mother, "What's one Indian!" Tradition says that some of the most annoying shots came from a sycamore tree on the north bank of the creek, near where the bridge now is, until a disgusted settler "saw something move" and fired, when an Indian tumbled through the branches and hit the ground, to rise no more. Only the big hollow trunk of the tree remains, and it is charred and blackened from the torch of a thoughtless hunter, but it is none the less an interesting relic of the tragic scenes of more than a century ago.

This desultory fighting, which went on for hours, was marked by constant efforts to destroy the station by fire, a weapon that had already proved so nearly fatal to the garrison. As the torch could only be used by openly facing the terrible rifles of the white men, it was abandoned for arrows bound around with the most combustible materials at hand, and shot burning and blazing at the fort from close but safe retreats. They fell in showers upon the dry cabin roofs made of

clap-boards, which were fastened down with cross poles, which gave them easy lodgment. Fortunately all the cabins were shed shaped and all the roofs sloped inwardly, so that the boys of the station who were posted there for the purpose, swept off the arrows as fast as they fell, without danger from the bullets of the enemy.

As Girty had failed to capture the fort by surprise, he took measures to prevent its being strengthened by reinforcements, which he knew, by the escape of the two men in the morning, might be expected at any time; and as the relief party would aim to enter the station by the northeastern gate, the heaviest part of the force was transferred from the camp, near the spring, to the upper end of the trace, leading to Lexington, and placed in ambush on both sides of it. This maneuver was executed without the risk of a single shot from the garrison, for the Indians passed around by the creek and were completely screened from observation by the woods and the corn that extended all the way from one point to another. The firing ceased, and the hidden savages waited in

silence for their prey. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, when the hot and tired volunteers came in sight of the station, and then they halted, not only to confer, but in amazement, for there was nothing whatever to indicate the presence of an enemy—not a gun was heard, not an Indian was seen, and it was hard for the inexperienced to even believe that the savages had been there at all. But the subtle ways of the enemy were understood by many an anxious-looking pioneer to whom the silence was ominous of evil, and the little force was arrayed for the desperate effort that they knew it would require to reach the fort. It was settled that the few mounted men from both Boone's Station and Lexington were to make a dash together by the trace for the gate that faced it, while the footmen pushed around through a large cornfield on the same side of the trace as the fort. The advance was ordered and the footmen moved at once, as quickly and as noiselessly as possible through the luxuriant corn. The sixteen mounted men,

ded by the gallant Ellis,* and urging their horses to a rate of speed that loaded the heated air with clouds of blinding dust, flew like a whirlwind along the narrow trace. Instantly there was a burst of rifle shots and terrific yells from more than 300 savages who poured into the obscured and swiftly moving shapes a cross fire that extended for a hundred yards. That they could ever have emerged from such a gauntlet of death seems incredible, but the fact that they did so is vouched for by an unimpeachable authority,† who attributes their escape to "the great dust that was raised by the horses' feet," and says they got safely into the fort without the slightest wound on man or horse. Was the charge of the Kentucky Pioneers so much

*Capt. Ellis seems to have been singularly adapted for this emergency, for he was an experienced Indian fighter, a natural leader of men, and well known to the settlers, especially those from Virginia, many of whom had served with him in the Revolution, or had been with him at Grant's Station, founded the first year of the county's settlement. He had just distinguished himself as the military leader of "The Traveling Church," the most unique and remarkable expedition ever made into pioneer Kentucky. He was a native of Spottsylvania county, Virginia, a son of the patriotic Ellis imprisoned by Governor Dunmore in 1775 and descended from a branch of the Ellis family sketched by Bishop Meade in his "Old Churches and Families of Virginia." He died in 1802 and was buried in the family burying ground on the farm now known as the R. B. Graves' place, on the Winchester pike. See History of Fayette county, page 496, and "Traveling Church."

†Bradford.

less heroic than the charge of the Light Brigade, simply because it lacked the "poignancy and circumstance of war," or failed to engage the genius of a Tennyson?

Cheer after cheer went up from the garrison as the dust-covered squad dashed with steaming horses through the quickly opened gate; but the wild rejoicing suddenly gave way to deep anxiety as the infantry failed to appear, and the indications of a violent tumult increased without. Their fears were well grounded, for the footmen, beset by terrible odds, were fighting for their lives. They had rapidly neared the fort unseen by the Indians, and might have reached it but for the generous devotion to their comrades and that precipitate courage which so distinguished the Kentucky pioneers. The moment they heard the storm of rifle shots at the head of the trace, without a thought that such a fire betokened the presence of an overwhelming force, they turned back and rushed to the aid of their friends, only to find that the horsemen had already gained the fort, while they themselves were cut off from it by a surging mass of disappointed

savages, who greeted them with yells of fury. Nothing but the high corn and the fact that the rifles of the Indians had just been discharged saved the heroic band from a massacre quick and complete. The savages, great as was their force, were careful about advancing on loaded guns, with nothing but tomahawks, and the moments that some of them devoted to the use of the powder horn, the pouch and the ramrod, delayed themselves and others behind them and gave the pioneers a chance to plunge deeper into the corn, through which they dodged and darted in every direction in a desperate effort to confuse and elude the swarming Indians. It was then that John Sharp, one of the Lexington militia, escaped, for he was too old to have ever saved himself except for the confusion. The wild flight, the deadly pursuit, the yells and cries, the tossing and breaking of the trampled corn, the rapid movements of a multitude of bodies, and the flashing of a multitude of tomahawks, made up a scene that was thrilling, but curious for the sound of rifle shots were rare, while rifles themselves were everywhere. The Indians, uncertain

most of the time whether the quickly shifting figures were friends or foes, could use their guns effectively but little, while the footmen hardly dared to fire at all, not only because one loaded gun would, under the circumstances, keep a crowd at bay, but because they would have no time to reload it when it was once discharged. A notable instance is given in this connection. One of the retreating men, whose name, unfortunately is not preserved, was so closely beset by James Girty (brother of Simon), who was leading on a band of the enemy, that he was unwillingly compelled to fire, and his pursuer fell, which brought the savages to a halt, and the settler escaped. But the fallen man, though apparently killed, was soon upon his feet again unharmed, for he had only been thrown by the force of the ball, which had been stopped by a thick piece of leather he had taken from the station tan vat and wrapped around the strap of his powder horn for future use. And so his miserable life was saved. The bewildering turmoil ended with the escape of most of the infantry through the woods and the cane-

brakes to Lexington, so that the casualties were few. Only two of the gallant footmen were killed, and four wounded, while the damage to the enemy was less still, if any at all.

It was nearly sunset when the chagrined and exasperated savages abandoned the pursuit, and from that time until night, they wreaked their vengeance on everything they could lay their hands on. They burned all the outbuildings and fences, damaged the hemp, pulled up the vegetables, cut down the corn and swept the settlement of its livestock, when it returned, as usual, to the station in the evening. According to the British account, 300 hogs and 150 head of cattle were killed, the few sheep were totally destroyed, and every horse outside the stockade was appropriated. The work of ruin only ended at nightfall, when the camp fires were lighted and the tired and sullen warriors roasted themselves a supper from the best of the slaughtered stock and prostrate corn.

The Indians were discouraged, their rifles became silent, and a final council of the

chiefs and leaders was held. It is worthy of note that Moluntha* was there, the veteran sachem who was afterward basely murdered by the same McGary, whose rashness precipitated the battle of the Blue Licks, and there also was the infamous Alexander McKee, the Tory, who had hoped that savage conquests would bring back to him his lands† on South Elkhorn that had been confiscated and settled on the infant Seminary of Transylvania. The conference was short and gloomy. All agreed that the fort, rude and simple as it was, was impregnable to small arms, and could not be taken by assault; that their failure to seize the place by stratagem early in the morning had given the

*Moluntha, the noted Shawanese, and brother-in-law of the great Corstalk, was the only one of the many Indian chiefs at the siege whose name has come down to us. Four years before this (1778) he was with Du Quesne in the 1-st attack on Boonesborough, and it was there that he accused Boone of killing his son, declaring that he had tracked him to that fort, a charge which Boone emphatically denied. Moluntha participated in the battle of the Blue Licks, and led his people against Clarke in his unpopular and unfortunate Shawanese campaign of 1786, but was forced to surrender. It was while he was then a prisoner that he was brained with an ax by McGary, on the miserable plea, that the old warrior had been at the battle of the Blue Licks. At a court martial held at Bardstown, March 2, 1787, McGary was found guilty (Vol. IV., page 259, Va. State Papers), but was never punished.

†He owned 2,000 acres of land on South Elkhorn, surveyed for him by Jas. Douglas, in June, 1774, but he succumbed to British gold, and the land was confiscated by an inquest of escheat—Daniel Boone and John Bowman being on the jury—and devoted to Transylvania Seminary. Fayette county records.

settler a whole day in which to scatter the news of the invasion, and the fact that some reinforcements had already arrived was proof enough that the white men would quickly rush to the rescue. The council favored an immediate retreat, but Girty, burning to avert, if possible, so signal a collapse of the siege, determined to try first the virtue of diplomacy. Forcing a way through the tall, damaged hemp, he managed to reach a big stump that stood near the site of the present old residence, but which was then a part of the clearing northwest of the station; and thus protected, he hailed the grim and silent fort, announced himself to the beleaguered inmates and asked if they knew him,* evidently courting recognition for some

*Probably no Indian leader of his time was personally known to so many of the Kentucky pioneers as Simon Girty. Kenton was not only his comrade in the Cresap war of 1774, but his life had been saved by Girty four years after that. Clarke, Boone and Harrod all knew him in Virginia, where he was one of Dunmore's scouts; immigrants from Pennsylvania saw him at Fort Pitt (Pittsburg), where he was employed as interpreter, and otherwise, for several years, and up to 1778, and during the four years of the Revolutionary war, between that date and the time of his appearance at Bryan's Station, numbers of Kentucky settlers, who had been captured by the Indians, and had escaped, must have seen him at old Chillicothe, Upper Sandusky and Detroit, where he spent much of his time, and where most of the white captives were taken. The prisoners from Ruddle's and Martin's, doubtless knew him only too well, for he was conspicuous at their surrender. It is plain from Reynolds' remarks that Girty was personally well known at Bryan's Station. There was no doubt whatever about his identity.

reason from the settlers who had known him either before or since the commencement of the war. He proclaimed himself in the hearing of Caldwell and his Tory rangers as the commander of the besieging force*, boasted of the multitude of his warriors and demanded the surrender of the place. Further resistance, he said, would seal the fate of the inmates, for he was hourly expecting reinforcements with artillery that would quickly blow the stockade to pieces. He could protect them now, he said, before the extremity was reached, and solemnly assured them that he would do so, if they capitulated at once, but he earnestly and impressively declared that if they allowed the place to be taken by storm, as it certainly would be that night on

*That the authority of Caldwell was thus publicly ignored is incontestable. (See Bradford's notes). Girty was the actual commander, and, however, a writer may detest his savagery, the prejudice is puerile and unworthy that causes a historian to deny the truth. Levi Todd, who fought against "The White Indian" in this campaign, knew personally whereof he spoke when he said in his letter of September 11, 1782, to Governor Harrison, of Virginia, that "Simon Girty alone had led the enemy during the invasion," (Virginia State Papers, vol. III, page 803) Boone, Marshall and Bradford, who were themselves pioneers, confirm the statement. The writer is, at this date, more than ever convinced of the correctness of this statement—that Girty was the de facto leader, made in his sketch of "The White Indian," published in the magazine of American History for March, 1886. Even certain recent writers on Girty, either from ignorance or prejudice, are unreliable. One of them, who dogmatically instructs (?) the public, seems to know nothing whatever of Bradford, one of the highest authorities in the case.

the arrival of his artillery, it would be impossible for him to save them from the Indians, who would then be excited to fury and be entirely beyond his control.

The speech of the White Indian made deeper than ever the depression already felt by the settlers at the repulse of their friends, the destruction of their property and the knowledge of the desperate straits that even one more day would reduce them to for water and provisions. They doubted the coming of the cannon, and they had no confidence whatever in savage promises of protection, but the camp fires so boldly lighted seemed to proclaim a settled persistence on the part of the enemy, and the dreaded guns might come after all. They would fight to the last, but all the same they shuddered and ceased to speak, as they thought of the deeds, "too barbarous to relate," as Boone said, that followed the boom of Byrd's artillery at Ruddle's Station.* They remembered that Girty was

*It is strange that such a tragedy as that enacted at Ruddle's Station in 1780, should have figured so little in Western annals, and should be so unfamiliar even now. Certainly the settlers at Bryan's never forgot it to their dying day. Some of the women and children were killed and scalped as soon as the fort was taken, and their quivering bodies thrown together in a pile. All the rest of the inmates were seized and scattered indiscriminately, and, bewildered and agonized, and loaded down with

there, and that the trail of the savage force from the Licking to the Ohio was marked by the disfigured corpses of women and children who had been murdered and scalped on the route. The gloomy silence was suddenly broken by an unexpected incident, especially characteristic of the early Kentucky pioneer. An impulsive young rifleman named Aaron Reynolds, who could boast and swear like Falstaff when the humor seized him, but who soon proved that he was capable, none the less, of gallant deeds, was so wrought up by Girty's speech that he forgot all the restrictions of age and discipline, and, rushing unbidden to a port hole, he hailed the savage leader and answered him in genuine backwoods style in "words with the bark on." "We all know you," he scornfully cried. "I have a trifling dog named Simon Girty, because he looks so much like you. Bring on your artillery if you've got any, and be

plunder, looted from their own cabins, were driven off into a captivity, which some endured for fourteen years, and from which others never did return. As fast as the women or children became exhausted from the weight of their burdens and the miseries of the march, they were tomahawked, scalped and left unburied. (Filson's Boon.) Was it surprising that the defender of Bryan's Station grew suddenly silent as they coupled recollections of Ruddle's with Girty's threat about his artillery?

damned to you," he yelled, "and if you or any of your naked rascals get into this place we will thrash you out again with switches we have gathered for that very purpose, for we wouldn't use guns against such as you." He ended his reply with the loud and confident statement that "We, too, are expecting reinforcements, the whole country is marching to us, and if you and your gang of murderers stay here another day we will have your scalps drying in the sun on the roofs of these cabins." Reynolds did not exactly believe his own brag about switches and scalps, but his bold talk served its purpose, for Girty was convinced that the siege was hopeless. He ended the parley with baleful expressions of sorrow at the destruction which he declared would certainly overwhelm the station by the rising of another sun, and retired to his camp insulted and incensed, to plan the most subtle and successful movement he ever made—one which at last drew the settlers away from their wooden strongholds* and brought upon them

*One writer, ignoring the plain object of Girty's retreat, and the fact that he had no cannon, says that he changed his plans, because he found that the Lexington fort was "proof against

the most terrible defeat they ever experienced on Kentucky soil. Any amount of mere-balderdash about Girty was let loose, as history, nearly a century ago, and much of it has been perpetuated, but in spite of it the fact is plain that the pioneers were not out-generated and overwhelmed by a fool, but by a man of more than ordinary military capacity. *

That night was the longest and most terrible that Bryan's Station had ever known, and many a fervent prayer went up from its suffering but resolute inmates. They were encircled by enemies, cut off from the world, faint from thirst, grieving for their dead, tortured by alternate doubts and fears about the coming of the artillery, and hoping for a

small artillery" a reason strangely irrelevant, and not mentioned by any of the accepted authorities.

"The war ended too quickly for Girty, closing as it did, so soon after the battle of the Blue Licks, his most important and successful experience as a warrior, and when he was at the height of his popularity and influence among his dusky brethren. One of the melodramatic incidents about Girty, included in the balderdash already alluded to, pictures him as conveniently and appropriately slain by Kentucky troops at the battle of the Thames, October 5, 1813. One is amused to see such an item accepted in so late a book as "The Winning of the West," by an author who rejects much of McClung's sketches as "sheer fiction." Girty took no part whatever in the battle of the Thames, and was not killed anywhere, but died in the same old way, more than five years after the battle, in February, 1818, near Malden, Canada, as stated by the writer in "The White Indian" published in the Magazine of American History for March, 1886.

imprisonment for one day and a night, dangers, anxieties and desperation had made the brief period, seem a very age. Then there was a quick hunt for Indian "signs" which showed that the enemy had retreated northward along the buffalo trace, after which the hungry settlers made a hasty breakfast, partly from the meat the savages had left on their roasting sticks, and then they proceeded sadly to pay the last simple duties to the gallant four,* who had died in defense of the fort. Down past the ruins that the torch and tomahawk had made, the fallen pioneers were carried and reverently laid to rest under the spreading branches of the forest trees in the little station graveyard across the creek. The disposal of such of the thirty slain Indian warriors as had not been secreted by their comrades was no

*Boone gives the loss of the garrison as four killed and three wounded, and the Indian loss thirty killed, wounded uncertain. Marshall follows Boone and says that of the whites two were killed and four wounded in the cornfield, and two killed and one wounded in the fort—making a total of four killed and five wounded, with "loss of the Indians very considerable." Cudwell (Haldimand MSS.) gives his losses as "five killed and two wounded," a highly improbable statement, without he means Tories only, when the complete exposure of the enemy during the charge on the fort is considered. There is no reason to doubt Boone, who had the respect and confidence of both his own people and the enemy.

small task, even with the scant ceremony that was shown them, but they were buried at last, according to tradition, in the bottom at the foot of the hillside on which most of them had fallen in the fatal charge of the early morning, not far from the spot afterwards used as the burial place for the negroes of the station.

And thus ended one of the most remarkable sieges known in the history of Indian warfare, and so especially notable for the number of strange events in favor of the garrison, that were crowded into so short a time that, to use the words of another, "a fatalist would see the hand of destiny in every stage of its progress." The early firing that prevented the march of the riflemen, the wonderful escape of the couriers, the wind that saved the station from the flames, the almost miraculous success of the desperate calvary charge and the trifling loss of the apparently doomed footmen, seemed indeed to prove that "fortune fought the battle of the settlers from first to last."

The burial of the dead and the efforts to save as much as possible from the wreck the

Indians had wrought were enough of themselves to make Saturday, the 17th, a day of excessive labor and commotion at Bryan's Station, but to all this was added the bustle and excitement occasioned by the arrival of settlers who began at once to gather there for the pursuit of the retreating savages. But that night the wornout defenders of the battle-scarred fort, relieved from all duties by fresh and willing hands, slept in peace the sleep of exhaustion. The next day, Sunday as it was, the commotion was greater than ever, for one small detachment after another came in from Lexington, Boonesborough* and Harrodsburg, where they had gathered, and from whence they had come, as soon as circumstances would permit, and all the morning was consumed in eager preparations for the pursuit. That Sunday afternoon they marched—a little band of 182 against an overwhelming force—and the

*A curious error of Mr. Brown's is noted in this connection. He says in an article in Harper's Magazine for June, 1887, that "The arrival of Boone and Todd caused Girty to draw off his force and retreat." Reference to Filson's Boone, Marshall and McBride's Pioneer Biography, will show that Boone and Todd did not arrive at the station until Girty had been gone a day at least. Enough men to meet such a force as Girty's could not be gathered, and even the most ordinary preparations be made, at a moment's notice.

heroines of the spring were left to guard the lonely fort.

And then came that fatal 19th of August,* when lured by the subtle Girty the impetuous hunters rushed into the slaughter pen made ready at the Blue Licks, and the pride and valor of pioneer Kentucky was crushed as by an avalanche. The horror and the frantic grief, that so quickly overwhelmed the stricken settlements, came first to Bryan's Station. To this, the nearest outpost to the tragic field, was driven back the bleeding and fainting survivors of the great disaster, and the groans of the wounded and dying that were sheltered in her cabins, mingled with the wails of the widows and orphans, who were not even to have a farewell look at their beloved dead.

This was the darkest and most critical period in the history of the Kentucky settlements, and for awhile their very exist-

*The Battle of the Blue Licks occurred on the 19th, or as Bradford says, "it took place two days after the siege." Joel McBride in his Pioneer Biography, says that he was a boy in the Lexington fort in 1782; that he sat on a fence with other boys and saw the men march from the fort on Sunday morning to reinforce Bryan's Station, and on the next day (Monday) he saw Logan's men pass. As Sunday was the 18th, this not only confirms the date of the battle, but our own statement that the siege ended early on the morning of the 17th.

once trembled in the balance, for a return of the savage army in the fall was already dreaded, and if it came with British cannon, the settlements would be swept from the face of the earth. Fortunately for the pioneers, they were aroused from a paralyzing apathy of despondency and grief by a trumpet call from the indomitable Clarke, for a counter movement to make impossible the anticipated invasion, and a few weeks after the battle of the Blue Licks they were again in motion. With them was a company of mounted men from Bryan's Station, under Capt. Robert Johnson, which had joined the quota from the interior of Kentucky, as it halted at the station, en route to the general rendezvous at the mouth of the Licking. The expedition returned from the Ohio country on the 4th of November. Five of the Chillicothe towns, in the region where Girty's army had assembled in August, were burned, the crops destroyed and the country for miles around made desolate.

But Kentucky's most romantic era was drawing to a close. In a short time, to the inexpressible relief of the crippled settle-

ments, the struggle with Great Britain ended, and though for years after that, the torch and the tomahawk of the predatory savage brought ruin to many an isolated cabin, no formidable body of Indians ever again invaded the district, so that the winter that followed the burning of the Chillicothe towns was the last one that saw Bryan's Station with a regular garrison.

In the spring of 1783, most of the men and women of the fort, who had suffered so much together, loaded their pack-horses with their pots and skillets, spinning wheels and "plunder," scant supplies of provisions, seeds and farming implements, and, with their children, negroes and hunting dogs, scattered to their own lands in the Blue Grass wilderness. For the rest of the year the fort was occupied by a few of the settlers, who had formed part of the garrison, and who, from time to time, during the summer and fall, gave temporary shelter to many a soldier of the disbanded Continental forces, who had joined the great stream of land hunters that now began to pour into the Caanan of the West. In 1784, Joseph Rogers, who with a

brother had already visited the place in 1782, took possession of his North Elkhorn land, which included Bryan's Station, and his family occupied some of the cabins of the fort.

Religious services seem to have been occasionally conducted in one of the station cabins about this time—1784—by Lewis Craig, who, in the year of the siege doubtless, preached the first sermon ever heard inside the stockade. A large majority of the early settlers of this part of Fayette county were Baptists, and on Saturday, the 15th of April, 1786, a number of them met at the fort and helped to regularly constitute "The Baptist Church of Jesus Christ" at Bryan's " which has continued to exist from that day to this, and is an inseparable feature of the locality. The most notable delegates to the

*See the original church book, still extant and well preserved. The meeting was composed of Lewis Craig and Benjamin Craig, delegates from South Elkhorn; William Cave and Bartlett Collins, from Big Crossing, and William Ellis, Augustine Eastin, Henry Roach, Joseph Rogers, Annie Rogers, Elizabeth Darnaby, Judith Tandy and Elizabeth Price, from Bryan's Station and neighborhood. They adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. Before the summer ended, the membership was increased by the addition of Ambrose Dudley, Agnes Ellis, William Tomlinson, William E. Waller, Annie Dudley, Sarah Ellis and John Darnaby. John Mason was first clerk, Augustine Eastin first Moderator, and Ambrose Dudley first pastor. Some of the Bryans, Grants, Hunts, Thompsons, Boswells, Monroes and Richardsons, became members after 1786.

meeting attended to organize this church, were Lewis Craig and William Ellis, the leaders of that famous meeting of the fall and winter of 1791, which so signally demonstrated that the pioneer Baptists of Kentucky could fight and endure as well as pray. It is an interesting fact that the church at Bryan's had but two pastors in nearly a century—Ambrose Dudley, elected in August, 1791, and his son and successor, Thomas P. Dudley, who died in 1890. The meeting of the Baptists in the cabin on the hill, ceased in 1793, when the first regular church building was erected on the present site, across the creek, and it was about that time that the custom began, of burying members of the church and neighbors in the church yard there. The first church edifice was succeeded by another in 1806, and the present, and third one, was built about the year 1867. In early days, when churches were few, the congregation was very large, and in August, 1801, when the "Upper Church," which was afterward known as

*See "Traveling Church," read by the author before the Filson Club, and published in 1891.

David's Fork, was constituted, 294 members were dismissed from the mother church for that purpose.

The year the pioneer church was planted—1786—was also the year of the unfortunate Shawanese campaign of General Clarke into the Wabash country, and Lexington riflemen, on their way to join the expedition, saw changes at Bryan's Station. A worm fence partly enclosed the famous hill, several of the log cabins of the fort had been combined into a rude but comfortable farmhouse, and the tall palisades were disappearing, for though the Indians continued to steal and murder, their parties were small, and the strong cabins alone were now the defenses in the most settled sections of the District. Some of the old cabins were used as negro quarters, and the place could claim a loom, a horse mill and a primitive arrangement for breaking hemp. The trace was wider and enlivened by trains of pack-horses going to and from Lexington, some of which carried out cargoes of skins of wild animals, while others came back loaded with salt from salt camps at the Lower Blue Licks, or with

western, middle and Eastern, commodities from Kansas and the Atlantic to which point they had come by the sea. The number of "barterages" in the long distance of 3,000 miles cannot be over 100, making the lands had been taken to and of the goods and money and the goods still going through the hands of the 100 they are accounted with 1000 values of goods. Trade between the tribes of the reports had had gone through the commercial fertility of the virgin soil of the Kansas region.*

About 1770, following after the great victory which closed the Indian troubles and encouraged the Indians to improve their dwellings, the Englishman, Dr. Henry, took notice of the habits of the Indians, and then to the spot in which Girty had stood when he tried to turn the garrison into prisoners. Much of the wood-work is said to have been made from seasoned timbers from old station cabins removed

*The statement is that at that time the Indians had been made to feel that the region was a regular market. A. N. S. says in referring to the fact that grain is raised in such abundance as to stagger belief—100 bushels of corn have been gathered from one acre, and 50 bushels of wheat. See American Museum for 1879.

about this time, and it is also asserted that parts of the old cabins were utilized when the negro quarters were built, that still remain back of the residence. In the year 1800, a two-story brick house was added to the one-story structure, which was undisturbed, and so the building remained until 1830, when it was extended and given more frontage toward the ancient buffalo trace, which is now a turnpike. No other changes took place up to the death of Mr. Rogers, which occurred in 1834,* nor from that time to the present, so that the entire house has remained substantially the same for sixty years, while the original one-story part of it, which forms the kitchen and "L" of the building, is a century old this year.

And now, 122 years from the time when the earliest known explorers reached this spot, another chapter, and one of grace and beauty, is added to the eventful story of Bryan's Station. The Lexington Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, descendants of the veterans of '76, and many

*Mr. Rogers died at the age of 93, and was buried on the place in a walled lot in the old orchard.

of them descendants of the early settlers and heroic defenders of Bryan's Station, have with grateful appreciation and abounding admiration for the immortal Women of the Spring, erected in their honor, and upon the spot they made famous, a memorial, which, in its simple and substantial beauty, is a faithful type of the true, the devoted and the great-hearted heroines of the historic form. The Lexington Daughters have been singularly and signally fortunate in this matter, for they commemorate a deed that stands alone—that is without a parallel. Individual instances of heroic women are plentiful from Jason of Ithaca to the Maid of Saragossa, from Flora Macdonald of Scotland to Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Jones of Kentucky; but as an act of valor and sacrifice shared by women of every race, by a band of women of every woman's condition, pallor and clanked at every step, the distance now represented is of the order of a hundred years.

In honoring the Women of the Spring, the Lexington Daughters honor the women themselves and themselves as well as the

their motto: "For Home and Country," have sounded a note of civilization and inspiration for the better preservation of our historic places, and for the payment of the debts of gratitude we owe to the departed men and women who did so much to make us what we are.

And this memorial, may it continue to designate the spot made glorious by the women of Bryan's Station, when the spring it encloses shall have ceased to flow; may it endure while the waters of the beautiful Elkhorn make their way to the waters of the picturesque and castellated Kentucky; may it remain as long as the blue grass bends and blows above the graves of the pioneers about it, and be as everlasting as the hill where the fated Red Men and the indomitable Anglo-Saxons battled for the possession of a garden of the gods. And so enduring, may generations yet to come, mindful of the glorious deed that has consecrated the spot, stand with uncovered heads before this memorial and still be able to

trace this inscription* which the gratitude
and patriotism of women have caused to be
graven upon its sides:

IN HONOR OF

The Women of Spain's Station,

WHO ON THE DAY OF AUGUST THE FIFTH, 1898,
HIST' IN AUBREY AND WIFE A HERO
DUE HAVE AND A SILENT
WELL-DEVELOPED
THAT WILL BE THE FUTURE OF THE
WELL-DEVELOPED

This Spring

THE WATER TOWER FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FUTURE
DEFENSE OF THE FUTURE
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